

## A Television Upon a Table on a Wall on a Wall

Mundane placates boring. The latter isn't academic or kind, it sits in that greyness tipping either way along the line that separates descriptive criticism from insult. Few hope to make boring art, but to make art that is interesting and fun and a good time. Art that puts out. The mundane, concerned with ('work that is concerned with') mundanity, does a conceptual art circular route from dull to interesting. All without the need to stop off and linger around the aesthetic insult of boredom. It happens too quick, in a gallery with artworks—perhaps Keith Farquhar's or Torsten Lauschmann's—one thinks, 'quite dry,' and then 'but isn't that *interesting*, being in this dryness?' In the everyday, in the purposeful display of non-interest.

Of interest is the literary critic, the definer of 'interesting', Sianne Ngai who wrote (to paraphrase, poorly) that calling something interesting is a pretty good way of saying just about nothing at all. 'Interesting' is vague, pointing only to the novelty of the object, acknowledging it exists. Interesting as a judgement abstains from critique, Ngai called it a step away from *merely interesting*, a step away from boring. Salvaged office desks lacquered with laminate in less than convincing wood effect is itself *interesting* as a step away from *boring* (*Admin Fireplace*, 2023). The woodgrain lines; it's not a tree, it's a polymer and wood fibres, it's bran flakes and videos of divorced men making coffee tables with pours of epoxy resin. The shape of it, the fireplace arrangement, takes you to the office, to the home, to the mantle with the kid's picture on it; a devastating reading, perhaps, might this be post-2020 flexible working? The everyday, the mundane, the readymade, the interesting. The world is full of interesting objects, boring objects, those that shift in definition from one form to the next, whereupon they may transform into something else. Can interesting objects, step merely, to boring, to fascinating, to interesting, to boring? Do objects sit still?

In the domestic setting sits a television, a recycled flatscreen with its innards ripped out and replaced; behind the haze, stuffed with brick-effect wallpaper and a vase of flowers, a fag, and a crushed up can of Stella against more wood effect. Lauschmann's ordinary domesticity (*Supervision*, 2023), rendered on a media device his work has formerly fired inside of, exists against a backdrop of familiarity. The feeling is an absence of choice, a slurry of potential, objects appear ready and willing from all places. The ubiquitous brick-effect wallpaper is seen in student accommodation communal areas, gaudy Grindr hook-up flats, WeWorks, coffee shops, lobbies and Pret A Manger. The L-shaped office desk greets the new employee, its surface scuffed from its old (same-same) occupant. *The objects are ready to see you now*. The familiarity of the objects, in novelty images, lurks obscured in the forceful arrangements; in the shapes of fireplaces and stools, in the still lifes contained in televisions.

The brick-effect wallpaper peels away to reveal the skeletal chassis of the television, to abandon the morbid composition of ordinary objects; books, flowers, tables. Obscured behind the sheet of acrylic diffuser, the picture is broken and depthless. The everyday material pulls in its audience and deserts them to the bareness of the substrate. A sombre depiction of contemporary life. There is little room for illusion, the starkness of the real thing stands observed like a loitering kid. The image is transformed within the time allotted to it, expanding with references. Surged full of images, bloated. The objects are in motion.

Likewise, Farquhar's barstool propped up with golf clubs for legs (*Stools*, 2023) borrows from an easiness of images. Those available for use are arranged in a school of connotations. The object with the trio of rubber-wrapped club handles staked into the ground reads car-boot, Frankenstein's Monster, men in jumpers, teenagers, pub trawlers and contemporary industrial design awards. 'Sit on this!' It shouts. The mundane becomes interesting, becomes playful.

Is there such a thing as boring art? Interesting art? Don't only boring people get bored? Only interesting people get interested? The everyday mundanity of the objects involved, in the televisions, dismembered desks, and golf clubs, work to create a site of friction between two categories.

An unseen bulldog pants from the rolled-down window of a parked car.

Breathless, exhausted, objects pull the image from the mind; hold it and turn it over in their hands. Beauty, zaniness, interest, and (dare I say) fun, tip-toe; derived from boredom, the everyday, the flatness of the readymade image and objects all around us; out.

Andy Grace Hayes

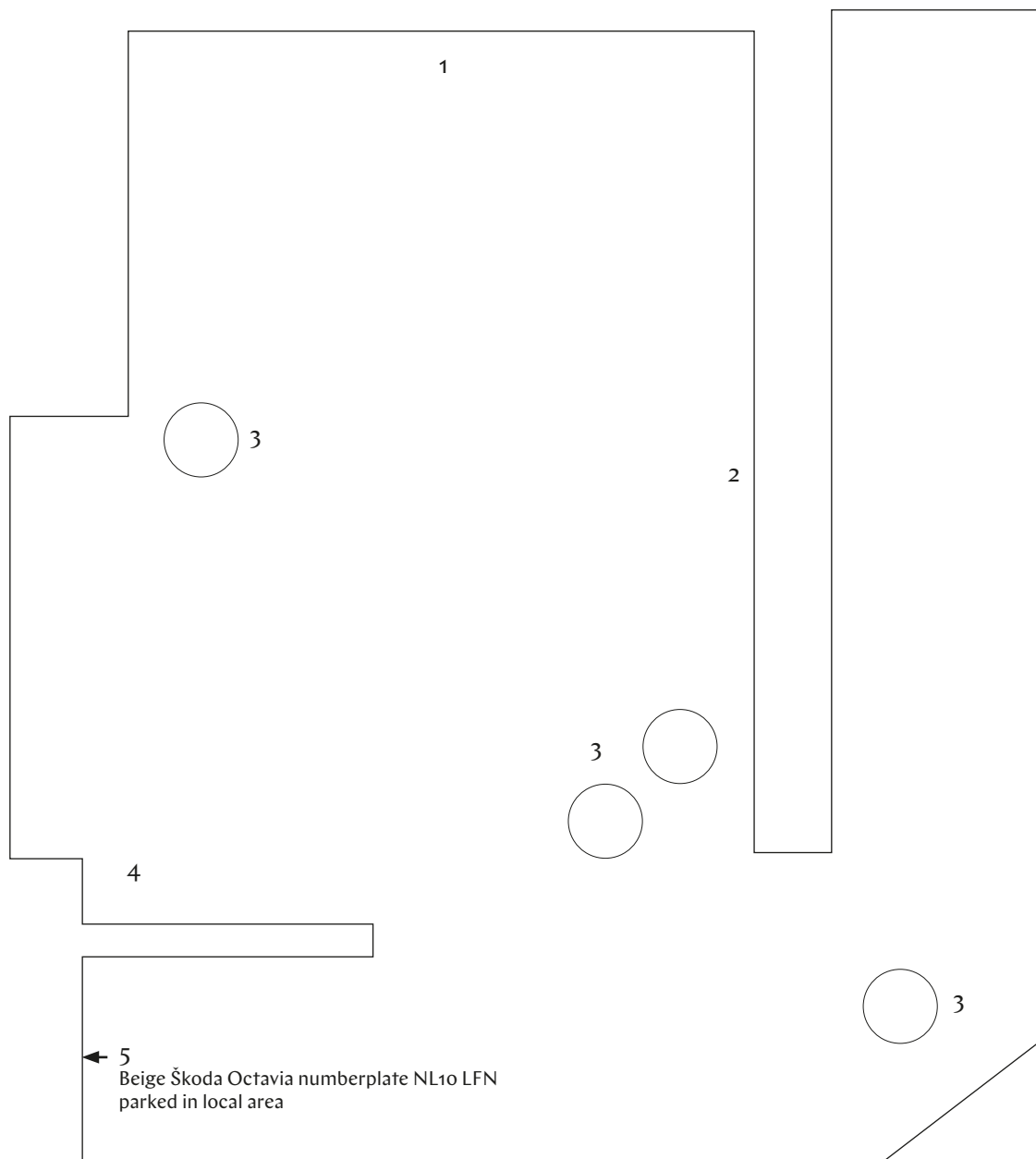
Broadside

13.05.23–17.06.23

## #island

Keith Farquhar & Torsten Lauschmann

Fri–Sat 12–5pm or by appointment



- 1 *Admin Fireplace* Keith Farquhar 2023
- 2 *Supervision (No. 1)* Torsten Lauschmann 2023
- 3 *Stools* Keith Farquhar 2023
- 4 *Supervision (No. 2)* Torsten Lauschmann 2023
- 5 *Untitled (dogs)* Keith Farquhar & Torsten Lauschmann 2023